



SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME

GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Interim Guidelines about Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) for Persons in the General Workplace Environment

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is investigating the spread of a respiratory illness called severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). Because the outbreak has initially affected international travelers who have recently visited mainland China; Hong Kong; Singapore; and Hanoi, Vietnam, CDC issued a travel advisory for people traveling to those areas (http://www.cdc.gov/travel/other/acute_resp_syn_multi.htm). You can learn more about SARS from the World Health Organization at <http://www.who.int/csr/sars/en/>. These websites will be updated as soon as new information is learned.

SARS is an infectious illness that appears to spread primarily by close person-to-person contact, such as in situations in which persons have cared for, lived with, or had direct contact with respiratory secretions and/or body fluids of a person known to be a suspect SARS case. Potential ways in which infections can be transmitted by close contact include touching the skin of other persons or objects that become contaminated with infectious droplets and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

Workers, who in the last 10 days have traveled to a known SARS area, or have had close contact with a co-worker or family member with suspected or probable SARS could be at increased risk of developing SARS and should be vigilant for the development of fever (greater than 100.4° F) or respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough or difficulty breathing). If these symptoms develop you should not go to work, school, or other public areas but should seek evaluation by a healthcare provider and practice infection control precautions recommended for the home or residential setting (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/ic-closecontacts.htm>); be sure to contact your healthcare provider beforehand to let them know you may have been exposed to SARS. For more information about the signs and symptoms of SARS, please visit CDC's website at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/>. More detailed guidance on management of symptomatic persons who may have been exposed to SARS, such as how long you should avoid public areas is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars/exposuremanagement.htm>.

As with other infectious illnesses, one of the most important and appropriate preventive practices is careful and frequent hand hygiene. Cleaning your hands often using either soap and water or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizers removes potentially infectious materials from your skin and helps prevent disease transmission.

The routine use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators, gloves, or, using surgical masks for protection against SARS exposure is currently not recommended in the general workplace (outside the healthcare setting).

For more information, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/sars> or call the CDC public response hotline at (888) 246-2675 (English), (888) 246-2857 (Español), or (866) 874-2646 (TTY)

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